

Civil Society & Regional Food Security

POLICY BRIEF NO.4

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CSOs and the SADC Dar-es-Salaam Declaration

Background

In May 2006, the Heads of State and Governments of SADC are due to review the implementation of the 2004 Dar-es-Salaam Extraordinary Summit Declaration and Plan of Action on Agriculture and Food Security in the SADC Region.

The Summit was held in the aftermath of the 2001-03 drought and subsequent food emergencies in several SADC countries. CSO observers at the Summit were pleased to note the urgency demonstrated at the meeting and the breadth of the Declaration in attempting to address these challenges. The Summit leaders were candid noting that *'in the past thirteen years food production, donor aid flows, government budgetary allocations to agriculture and rural development have declined, while food imports, food aid, and population have substantially increased'*.

They also recognized that *'the major underlying reasons for the prevalence of hunger in the SADC region include inappropriate national agricultural and food policies and inadequate access by farmers to key agricultural inputs and markets'*.

Aside from measures to promote agricultural production, the leaders also stressed social aspects of poverty noting that *'inadequate food security, poor nutrition, inadequate essential public services, limited reproductive health services, gender imbalances and high levels of illiteracy impact negatively upon the quality of life of our people, especially those living with HIV/AIDS'*.

Almost two years on - and in the midst of another regional food crisis - CSOs need to ask whether the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration has made a difference and what else needs to be done to galvanise regional food security efforts. But first, what did the Declaration itself say?

The Dar-es-Salaam Declaration



The Declaration dealt with the short term (2004-06) and the medium to long term (2004-10) agricultural development measures.

In the short term, the emphasis was almost entirely on national measures to increase agricultural production and value-addition through processing and agri-business development. These were:

- provision of key agricultural inputs
- crop and livestock pest and disease control
- livestock, fisheries and drought-tolerant crop improvement
- improved water management and irrigation services
- agro-industrial development

The medium to long term measures were also largely in the realm of national actions. These included:

- sustainable management of natural resources
- reform of extension services
- farmer training
- support to farmers' organizations
- removing gender discrimination
- mitigation of the impact of HIV/AIDS

Regional Measures

There were also measures which had a specific regional dimension.

On market access, the Declaration commits governments to expedite the harmonization and implementation of SPS (food and plant hygiene) measures, and *'to strengthen rules and disciplines governing trade in agriculture through the implementation of the SADC Trade Protocol'*.

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Also under market access, the Declaration seeks to *'establish price stabilization mechanisms in accordance with WTO provisions on domestic support'*.

While not necessarily a regional trade protocol matter, such mechanisms clearly require policy co-ordination within the region.

On **disaster preparedness**, one aim is to *'consider the establishment of a Regional Food Reserve Facility'* (along with enhancing vulnerability monitoring and strengthening national early warning systems).

There is also a commitment on **financing and investment** which, although national in nature, does have important regional dimensions for CSO advocacy. The commitment is to *'progressively reduce budgetary allocations for agriculture to at least 10% of total national budgets as recommended by the AU Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in 2003'*.

Monitoring Dar-es-Salaam

As with all Declarations, the terms 'enhance', 'mainstream', 'promote' etc. are much in evidence and quantification of targets is difficult to capture. There is enough detail, however, for the SADC Secretariat to have attempted, by October 2004 to establish a 'tracking system' as directed by the Ministers. This consisted of a six monthly reporting requirement from SADC governments and a 21 - page questionnaire.

However, by October 2005, only four countries had submitted reports (Botswana, Malawi, Mauritius and Tanzania); most of the returned questionnaires had significant gaps; and four countries (South Africa, DR Congo, Zambia and Zimbabwe) had submitted nothing at all.

To energise the process, the Secretariat convened a workshop for government reporting-officers in late October that agreed a more simplified reporting system (but retained half-yearly reports).

The Role of CSOs

SADC, like other international organizations, does have a reputation for issuing declarations and then appearing to make insufficient effort to follow through on agreed action plans. But it would be wrong simply to blame governments for lack of interest in implementation. One of the important roles of CSOs is to hold international bodies accountable, CSOs need to ensure that they apply well-informed pressure to ensure that government commitments are acted on and are not approached at a leisurely pace, or even abandoned.

With regards to the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration, CSOs in the region may want to combine to provide their own progress reports. But a more practical approach might be to select a few of the more quantifiable measures proposed and subject these to comparative investigation.

At a Look, Listen & Learn regional food security meeting held by SARPAN in Johannesburg, November 2005, public spending on agriculture was discussed as one possible suitable barometer for assessing Dar-es-Salaam (and NEPAD) commitments to increase the proportion of spending on agriculture and food security. Some CSOs, such as NASFAM in Malawi, already monitor public agricultural spending.

However, for comparisons to be made both across countries and over time, there needs to be agreement on what constitutes agricultural spending. Public expenditure is not only often split across ministries (water, community development, livestock etc. as well as agriculture) but also split at different levels of government (provincial and local as well as national). Furthermore, some large items of expenditure, such as commercial food imports in times of emergency, may come under the Ministries of Finance or Commerce.

These are not insuperable difficulties, and simply working together to address them, could provide a valuable basis for CSO engagement across the region.

The full Dar-es-Salaam Declaration can be accessed on the SADC website - www.sadc.int

Look, Listen and Learn is a joint project between

Southern African Regional Poverty Network

www.sarpan.org

Overseas Development Institute

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